

Belmont Cable Access Committee (BCAC)
Minutes 2/17/04
7:30PM, BCTV Studio

Present

Committee: John Verrilli, Todd Bloniarz, Maryann Scali

Comcast: Abiodun Shobowale, Mark Ventola (Mark left for approximately an hour but returned before the end of the meeting).

Call to Order

John Verrilli officially called the meeting to order at 7:50

Distribution of Contact List

More revisions/updates to be made to the contact list, including the addition of Abiodun's cell phone number.

Review of 1/27/04 Minutes

Minutes were received, approved, and will be forwarded to Sandra Curro with some minor modifications: the Media Center Task Force meeting scheduled for February 9th was postponed until February 23rd.

Issues from the Community/Complaints/Concerns/Coverage

One gentleman called the Ch. 8 studio to compliment the station on its coverage of school committee meetings, which featured very good audio and video quality. Maryann was at a recent historical society meeting and heard people complain about continued problems with Ch. 8's bulletin board, along with complaints regarding the new equipment at the station and when it will start being used.

Maryann also asked Mark and Abiodun why it seemed that the same announcements were running on the bulletin board all the time when there is a two-week airtime limit? John pointed out that he recently taped some Ch. 8 shows only to find that the programs did not air when stated on the schedule listed in the Belmont Citizen-Herald newspaper. In addition some of the shows being aired on Ch. 8 were "unwatchable" due to modulation/tape quality issues. The BCAC determined that (1) it would be a good idea if the Ch. 8 bulletin board could be checked daily to make sure that all announcements were current; (2) programs should air at the times listed in the newspaper and on the Ch. 8 bulletin board; and (3) all tapes being aired should be of viewable quality.

Upcoming meetings that were requested by the BCAC for Ch. 8 coverage included the License Ascertainment Hearing on March 8th at Town Hall (continued from February 2nd—refer to notes later in minutes), the Candidates' Night at the Chenery Middle School on March 25th, and the Town Meeting Warrant discussion on April 22nd.

Report on Studio Operations

With the Alphagen video bulletin board generator still experiencing problems, Mark reported that it will be sent out for repairs this coming week and will be temporarily replaced by the old bulletin board previously used at Ch. 8. Last time the Alphagen was sent out it took nearly two months to get it back; hopefully it will not take as long to fix this time around.

The February 9th Selectmen's meeting did not air live due to a construction crew working at Town Hall that severed an underground cable. Because of this accident no live meetings can be

aired from Town Hall until the cable is repaired; as of right now there is no timetable to when it will be fixed.

The new equipment has still not been set up in the Ch. 8 studio. The BCAC made it clear that the goal is to have three of the four new digital camcorders used as studio cameras and would like to have them set up by the next BCAC meeting on March 16. Currently there is a package in Lexington containing some of the equipment ordered in November that will hopefully include a monitoring system used to communicate with the camerapeople. Abiodun and Mark plan on setting up the studio equipment themselves.

Finally, the recorded message on the studio telephone's answering machine has not been updated to be more 'user-friendly'. John is going to speak to Mark Apostolon about whether a voice mailbox can be set up at Ch. 8 giving callers the choice of pressing '1' if they want to speak to the studio personnel and bypass listening to the phone number to call for Comcast customer service. If choosing the studio selection the caller would hear the studio's hours, which could possibly be updated on a weekly basis as needed.

License Ascertainment Investigation and Hearing

The hearing on February 2nd at the Selectmen's Room in Town Hall was attended by members of the Cable Television Advisory Committee; Frank Foss, Manager of Government Affairs at Comcast; and John Verrilli, BCAC Chair. John talked about the quality of the signal transmitted from Ch. 8, as well as an item listed on the station's budget regarding equipment repair and replacement.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the BCAC will be on Tuesday, March 16 at 7:30, BCTV Studio.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Todd Bloniarz